

East Alabama Mental Health recognizes National Prevention Week

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East Alabama Mental Health-Prevention Services is celebrating National Prevention Week, an annual health observance dedicated to increasing awareness and action around substance abuse and mental health issues.

The weeklong observance is held each year during the third week of May, near the start of summer. Summer is a season filled with celebrations and recreational activities in which substance use and abuse can happen, such as graduation parties, proms, weddings, sporting events and outdoor activities.

National Prevention Week is timed to allow schools and communities to take part in prevention-themed events before the school year ends, raising awareness in students of all ages.

According to SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2004), percentages of marijuana, cigarette and alcohol initiates among youth increase between spring (April and May) and summer (June and July), and the timing of NPW helps to educate young people and their families at this critical time of year.

The main goals of National Prevention Week are to involve communities in raising awareness of behavioral health issues and in implementing prevention strategies, to foster partnerships with federal agencies and national organizations dedicated to behavioral and public health, and to promote and disseminate quality behavioral health resources and publications.

Prevention Services works daily to implement important environmental strategies related to reducing underage drinking through involvement with the local schools and community organizations.

For more information on National Prevention Week or Lee County's prevention initiatives, contact East Alabama Mental Health at 334-742-2112.